Music at Convocation Hall

Music at Convocation Hall II

Visiting Artists

U of C String Quartet
Edmond Agopian, violin
Adriana Lebedovich, violin
Dean O'Brien, viola
Beth Root Sandvoss, cello
with
Guillaume Tardif, violin

Sunday, January 27, 2008
2:15 pm Pre-Concert Introduction
by **Guillaume Tardif**
Edmond Agopian
3:00 pm Concert

Convocation Hall
Arts Building
University of Alberta

UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

Program

Terzetto for Two Violins and Viola, Op. 74 (1887) — Antonin Dvořák (1841-1904)

- Introduzione: Allegro ma non troppo
- Larghetto
- Scherzo: Vivace— Trio, poco meno mosso
- Thema con Variazioni— Poco adagio— Moderato— Molto allegro

Sonatine for Two Violins (1994) — Sophie-Carmen Eckhardt-Gramatté (1901–1974)

- Schnell
- Ruhig
- Gigue

Serenade for Two Violins and Viola, Op. 12 (1920) — Zoltán Kodály (1882-1967)

- Allegramente
- Lento, ma non troppo
- Vivo

Intermission

Klezhmer and East European music,
arranged for string quartet by Edmond Agopian

Program Notes
by Melaena Allen Grierson

Antonin Dvořák (1841–1904)
Probably best known for his "New World" Symphony, Dvorák was a Czech composer of Romantic music. Like Kodály, he was interested in folk music, and the traditional sounds of Bohemia and Moravia influenced his compositions. Although he spent three years in New York as the director of the National Conservatory of Music, the rest of his life was spent in his homeland, devoted to teaching and composition.

His compositional output consists of concertos, oratorios, symphonic poems, operas, and chamber music. Although his compositional forms were closely based on that of Beethoven, one can also hear the influence of Wagner, particularly in his symphonic poems. He wrote 14 string quartets as well as various other chamber music works.

Terzetto for Two Violins and Viola, Op. 74 (1887)
I. Introduzione: Allegro ma non troppo
II. Larghetto
III. Scherzo: Vivace— Trio, poco meno mosso
IV. Thema con Variazioni— Poco adagio— Moderato— Molto allegro

Composed at the height of his career, the *Terzetto* was written for an amateur violinist who lived in the same rooming house with Dvorák. The student's teacher was to play the other violin, and it is assumed that Dvorák himself was to play the viola. The *Terzetto*, however, turned out to be beyond the capabilities of the student, for whom Dvorák later wrote a more accessible work.

Described as "charming and unusual", this work is strongly influenced by melodic and rhythmic elements of Dvorák's traditional music. Opening in a lyrical manner, the first movement contrasts material that is darker, providing a sense of agitation. In the *Largetto* of the second movement, we hear the rural tranquility of the Bohemian countryside, which surrounds a central section of leaping dotted rhythms. The third movement contrasts a lively and energetic dance with the gentle lilt of the trio. The last movement opens dramatically, setting the mood for the variations, which finally resolve in C major.

Sophie-Carmen ("Sonia") Eckhardt-Gramatté (1901–1974)
Eckhardt-Gramatté, born in Russia, moved to Winnipeg in 1953 and was a well-regarded Canadian composer. Educated at the Conservatoire de Paris, she was both a virtuoso violinist and pianist who developed her talents at a very young age. Throughout her professional career she toured extensively, and after 1930 she devoted herself exclusively to composition.

Her music spans over 175 compositions, largely written for instrumental music. In view of her own abilities perhaps it is not surprising that a significant quantity is written for virtuoso performers. Stylistically, her early works reflect first the influence of the Parisian salons and the polyphony of Bach, with a move to a neo-classical, almost jazzy sound in the 1940s. In the 1950s she experimented

with serialism and influences from Bartók, but overall her career may be characterized by a reluctance to commit to an overriding compositional aesthetic.

In 1982 her surviving husband established the Eckhardt-Gramatté Foundation devoted to her memory. This organization was dedicated to the promotion and dissemination of the music of Eckhardt-Grammaté and that of her late husband, Walter Gramatté.

Sonatine for Two Violins (1994)
Characteristic of Eckhardt-Gramatté's rich harmonic style and exuberant rhythmic energy, the piece opens with a quick-paced dialogue between the instruments, punctuated by strong cadential gestures and tuneful -but metrically uneven- insertions. The second movement proposes calmer ideas, lyrical and sweet. However, the movement reaches moments of great intensity following gradual and convoluted pushes upward. The finale, called gigue, is typically brisk and folk-like. Fast figurations, open intervals, and chromatic counterpoint are all features of this neo-baroque invention, another example of the composer's detailed understanding of the possibilities of the violin. (GT)

Zoltán Kodály (1882–1967)
Kodály pursued an active life as composer, music educator, ethnomusicologist, linguist, and philosopher. A Hungarian nationalist, he become interested in folk music through his study of Hungarian folk tales, and actively collected folk music throughout most of his life, accompanied by his colleague Béla Bartók. His principles of music education, based on the advocacy of good quality music and the belief that all persons are innately musical, were highly influential in Hungary and have been disseminated to many other countries. He wrote several treatises and compositions designed for music educators.

After receiving his PhD in philosophy and linguistics, Kodály took a position as professor of music at the Academy of Music in Budapest. He composed through much of his life, although he was shy by nature and his compositions were rarely well known. His works, while strongly influenced by his knowledge and love of Hungarian folk music, also display roots in the classical, late-romantic, impressionist and modernist traditions. His works are highly lyrical, and the majority is for chorus.

Serenade for Two Violins and Viola, Op. 12 (1920)
I. Allegramente
II. Lento, ma non troppo
III. Vivo

His last, and possibly finest, chamber work, *Serenade* features non-standard string trio instrumentation (usually violin, viola, and cello), although it was explicitly created according to the classical chamber model following the fundamentals of Haydn and Mozart. Bartók described the work as tonally based, although without strict adherence to the major-minor system.

The work opens in F major with a joyous sonata form in triple meter that nevertheless repudiates any suggestion of dance form through the vigourous accompaniment pattern. Although there is no development section, the various themes are reinterpreted until all the material has been recapitulated. The viola's open string on C can be heard in the second theme, creating a rich colour.

The second movement in this work is so evocative of human emotions, complete with directions in the score, that Kodály's biographer has suggested that it might have been written to be intentionally programmatic. Because of its drawn-out intervals of sevenths and ninths, Bartok likened this movement to a "...tonal fairy-land, neither heard nor dreamed of before."

The final movement is an extended sonata form evocative of Hungarian dance through syncopation, strummed "guitar" accompaniments, and imitations of bagpipe drones. As a work, *Serenade* deftly captures the essence, or spirit, of Hungarian national music—yet without any direct quotation—that was so dear to Zoltán Kodály.

Klezmer and East European Ethnic Music, arranged for String Quartet
by Edmond Agopian

A discussion of this work will take place immediately preceding its performance.

U of C Quartet

"They balance, blend and interweave perfectly whether playing Mozart or Shostakovich…Each instrument took turns in the spotlight with breathtaking perfection…" Maev Brennan–The Daily Courier. "…dynamite Romanian fiddler Edmond Agopian." Penguin Eggs–Canada's Folk, Roots and World Music Magazine. Originally formed in 1994 as the quartet in residence at the University of Calgary with Edmond Agopian, Amanda Forsyth, Olga Kotova and Christopher Sandvoss, the quartet has performed in concert halls across Canada and has been broadcast regionally and nationally on CBC Radio. Its CD recording of Brahms's Piano Quintet with renowned Canadian pianist Anton Kuerti received enthusiastic reviews. As the resident string quartet at the University of Calgary, the quartet regularly works and performs with top students from the Performance area, and U of C faculty. It has commissioned and premiered works by U of C Composition faculty, students and alumni. Over the next three years, the quartet will present the complete Beethoven String Quartet Cycle; a first in Calgary.

Along with the traditional classical repertoire, the quartet includes in its concerts music that is meant to bridge the gap between the folk and classical music traditions: Klezmer and eastern European folk music, arranged for string quartet by Edmond Agopian. The University of Calgary String Quartet is supported by the John Lee Roberts Distinguished Professorship in Fine Arts award. The award was made possible by a donation from U of C alumnus, John Lefebvre.

Edmond Agopian
violin

In 2005, Prof. Edmond Agopian was awarded the Alberta Centennial Medal " in recognition of outstanding achievements and service to the people and province of Alberta". At the University of Calgary, he was recently awarded the John Peter Lee Roberts Distinguished Professorship in Fine Arts. Edmond Agopian graduated from the University of Toronto with a Bachelor's degree in Music Theory and History, from the Juilliard School with a Master's degree in Violin-Performance, and from the Masterplayers International Music Academy, Switzerland, with an Honours Diploma in Conducting. His violin playing has received accolades for both his recordings and performances: "One of the best recordings of the year..." (Off the Record, CBC Radio) "His performance...was a triumph, both of technique and integration." (The Toronto Star) He has performed in Canada, Taiwan, the United States and Europe, and has been featured on CBC Radio French and English regional and national broadcasts. A champion of Canadian music, he has premiered dozens of works by Canadian composers, including works he has himself commissioned, and as past member of the New Works Calgary Ensemble. He is the first violinist of the UCalgary String Quartet and for thirteen years, he was the music director Calgary's professional string orchestra, the Kensington Sinfonia. He has been on the faculty of the Morningside Music Bridge program since its inception in1996. In 2002, he was appointed as Music Director of the Calgary Youth Orchestra, Mount Royal College Conservatory. He is also the founder and artistic director of U of C's chamber music festival Contrasts. In Canada, orchestras he has conducted include the Calgary Philharmonic Orchestra, the National Arts Centre Orchestra, Orchestra London, the Hamilton Philharmonic and the Canadian Chamber Orchestra. His most recent conducting engagement was with the Shanghai Opera Orchestra, in Shanghai, China, as part of the Morningside Music Bridge Festival. Under his direction, the University of Calgary Orchestra released its first recording, which was described by the Calgary music critic Bob Clark as a "hands-down winner". The recording features music by Canadian composers, including works by U of C Composition faculty and students. The orchestra has also been featured on CBC Radio regional and national broadcasts. Mr. Agopian moved to Calgary in 1991 to take the positions of Professor of Violin and Conductor at the University of Calgary, and Artist-in-Residence at Mount Royal College Conservatory. His violin method The No Time to Practice Technique Companion has been on Shar Music Company's bestseller list.

Adriana Lebedovich,
violin

In May, 2007, Adriana Lebedovich won a permanent position as a violinist in the Calgary Philharmonic Orchestra while still in her third year of studies at the Univesity of Calgary. At present she is in her fourth year of a Bachelor of Music program at the University of Calgary, majoring in Violin Performance, and is an extended member of the UCalgary String Quartet. Ms Lebedovich began playing the violin at the age of three. She has studied with Katherine Grigoriu, Elaine Henchell, Theresa Plotnick, Jeff Plotnick, John Lowry and is currently studying with Edmond Agopian. Adriana won the University of Calgary Concerto Competition in April 2006 and played the first movement of the Tchaikovsky Violin Concerto with the Calgary Philharmonic Orchestra. She has competed in the Calgary Kiwanis Music Festival for over ten years, winning numerous medals and scholarships and attended the Académie Musicale Internationale "Barbara Krakauer" program in Vaison-la-Romaine, France. She has also attended the Banff Centre summer program and the Aria International Music Festival in the United States. Adriana has played in numerous master classes including those given by James Ehnes, Jasper Wood, Catherine Manoukian, Corey Cerovsek, the Lafayette String Quartet, Mickhail Kopelman, Geoff Nuttall, among others. Adriana enjoys Ukrainian dancing and playing in a Ukrainian dance band. She also performs and does orchestration for the Korinnya Ukrainian Folk Ensemble and jams regularly with an ensemble of Ukrainian folk musicians at cultural events.

Dean O'Brien
viola

Dean O'Brien completed the Doctorate of Musical Arts Degree from the University of Texas at Austin in May 2000. He received his Bachelor of Music and Master of Music degrees from the Eastman School of Music in Rochester, NY with additional studies at the Peabody Conservatory, the Banff Centre and the University of California at Santa Barbara. Dr O'Brien has taught viola and violin at Medicine Hat College, where he also conducted the Medicine Hat Junior String Orchestra and Co-Conducted the Medicine Hat College Academy Orchestra. He has also served as principal viola of the Montreal Chamber Orchestra, Victoria Texas Symphony Orchestra, Mid-Texas Symphony, Orchestra of Saint David's and the Santa Barbara Chamber Orchestra and has played with the Austin, San Antonio, Albany, NY and Santa Barbara Symphony Orchestras, as well as the orchestras of the New Texas and Victoria Bach Festivals. His principal teachers include Roger Myers, Heidi Castleman, James Dunham and Heiichiro Ohyama.

Dr O'Brien is currently an Instructor of Violin and Viola at Mount Royal College Conservatory and Principal Viola of the Red Deer Symphony Orchestras, as well as the Artistic Director of the Calgary Pro Musica Society.

Beth Root Sandvoss
cello

Beth was born in Madison, Wisconsin where, in her early years as a cellist, she studied with Margaret Christy. Ms Sandvoss pursued further studies in Madison, Cleveland and San Francisco with cellists Parry Karp, Alan Harris, and Irene Sharp. She has been a member of the Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra, the San Jose Symphony, the Madison Symphony, the Victoria String Quartet, and the Calgary Philharmonic Orchestra. Ms Sandvoss's performances have taken her throughout North America as well as the Far East. She has recorded for WERN Madison public radio, RTHK Radio Hong Kong, and CBC Radio. Ms Sandvoss has a very active chamber music career in Canada. She is a founding member of the acclaimed Land's End Chamber Ensemble and is a member of the University of Calgary's faculty string quartet. Ms Sandvoss collaborates continually with fine musicians around Canada and the U.S. Along with her performing career, Ms Sandvoss is a very dedicated pedagogue. She has been asked to work with teachers on her methods and is a sought after clinician. Her pupils have won numerous competitions in Canada and are regularly invited to summer festivals around the world. She is a faculty member at the Mount Royal College Conservatory as well as the University of Calgary and spends her summers teaching and performing at music festivals throughout Canada and the United States. Ms Sandvoss has the great pleasure and privilege to perform on a cello made by her husband, Luthier, Christopher Sandvoss.

Guillaume Tardif
violin

Guillaume Tardif is Associate Professor at the Department of Music, University of Alberta. He had been featured as soloist and recitalist across Canada, USA, Europe, Asia and South America. His varied interests include recording production, solo violin arrangement and composition, and pedagogy

Upcoming Events

February

1 Friday, 8:00 pm
Music at Convocation Hall I
WindRose Trio
Beth Levia, oboe
Jeff Campbell, clarinet
Matthew Howatt, bassoon
"From Mozart to Martinu"
Mozart *Divertissement No. 3 in B Flat Major*; Constant *Trio for Oboe, Clarinet, and Bassoon*; Milhaud *Suite (d'après Corrette);* Rózsa *Sonatina for Clarinet Solo;* Martinu *Quatre Madrigaux*
Admission: $20/adult, $15/senior, $10/student
Advance tickets are available exclusively at TIX on the Square, 420-1757, and tickets are available at the door

4 Monday, 12:00 pm
Music at Noon, Convocation Hall
Student Recital Series
Featuring students from the Department of Music
Free admission

6 Wednesday, 5:00 pm
Hear's To Your Health
Nai-Yuan Hu, violin
Jacques Després, piano
Mozart *Sonata for Keyboard and Violin in F Major, KV 377 (374 e); Sonata for Keyboard and Violin in B-Flat Major, KV 454*
Free admission

7 Thursday, 5:00-7:00 pm
Violin Masterclass
Visiting Artist Nai-Yuan Hu
Admission at the door: $10

8 Friday, 7:00 pm
Visiting Artist Nai-Yuan Hu, violin
Featuring Mozart *Four sonatas for keyboard and violin*
Studio 27, Fine Arts Building
Admission: TBA

10 Sunday, 3:00 pm
"Choir of Choirs"
University of Alberta
Centennial Celebration
featuring the University of Alberta
Concert Choir
(Debra Cairns, Conductor)
Mixed Chorus
(Robert de Frece, Conductor)
Chorale St Jean
(Laurier Fagnan, Conductor)
Augustana Choir
(Ardelle Ries, Conductor)
Madrigal Singers
(Leonard Ratzlaff, Conductor)
with the University Symphony Orchestra
(Tanya Prochazka, Conductor)
and the University of Alberta
Symphonic Wind Ensemble
(Angela Schroeder, Conductor)
Tickets available through Winspear Box Office, 428-1414

15 Friday, 8:00 pm
University of Alberta
Symphonic Wind Ensemble
Angela Schroeder, Conductor
Admission: $15/adult, $10/stud/sen
Advance tickets are available exclusively at TIX on the Square, 420-1757, and tickets are available at the door

department of Music

Unless otherwise indicated - Convocation Hall, Arts Building
Please note: All concerts and events are subject to change without notice. Please visit our website: *www.ualberta.ca/music* or call 492-0601 to confirm concert information (after office hours a recorded message will inform you of any changes to our schedule).